

What we need is a considered debate on this subject. Apparently my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are content to maintain the status quo by these scare tactics, and let Medicare go bankrupt.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority will not let this happen. We are committed to preserving, protecting, and strengthening Medicare for this generation and future generations.

ARBITRARY CUTS IN MEDICARE ARE IMPRUDENT

(Mr. DOYLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of our communities, hospitals, and the health of today's and tomorrow's senior citizens. If we are to bring about Medicare reform which will prove to be truly beneficial, we must first reach a consensus that reforms must achieve specified goals without creating new, more difficult problems.

In the Pittsburgh area alone, there are seven hospitals which would face almost certain shutdown as a result of these proposed cuts. It is neither prudent nor logical to make devastating cuts to Medicare in such an arbitrary fashion. The sound-thinking, hard-working people of western Pennsylvania and across this country will tell you that putting the cart before the horse will get Medicare nowhere fast.

A recent national poll shows that 72 percent of the American public oppose Medicare cuts being made to pay for tax breaks. One has to question how making major cuts to Medicare in part to fund tax breaks could be construed by anyone as fiscally conservative.

I urge my colleagues to oppose these ill-conceived and reckless cuts which not only shake the current foundation, but cause irreparable damage to the future stability of the Medicare system.

ACT NOW TO SAVE MEDICARE, NOT LATER

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the liberals are continuing their scare campaign against the seniors of our country, telling them that Republicans are going to take away their Medicare benefits. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the liberals sound like they want to change the name from Medicare to MediScare.

But I would like to tell you something: I like Medicare, I like providing seniors with crucial medical security. And let me tell you what else I like. I like the idea of Medicare lasting a long, long time, so that future generations will also enjoy medical security.

But the President's Board of Trustees on Medicare tells us the system is going bankrupt in 7 years. Unless we act now, the future looks bleak.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my liberal colleagues, let us forget the MediScare tactics. Let us channel our energy into something productive. Work with us to save Medicare, and please stop scaring our senior Americans.

WE NEED SPECIFICS ON CHANGES IN MEDICARE

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I believe it was old Will Rogers who said all I know is what I read in the papers, and were he around today, he would have a great deal in common with the seniors and the people who care about seniors, who are concerned about Medicare.

Because you see, all that our Republican colleagues have had to say about their specific plan to change and alter and reform and refine Medicare is that they think that ought to be done. If American seniors or Will Rogers were to have read the Times on Monday, they would have learned one of the specifics of this particular secret plan, that the Republicans think that Medicare beneficiaries should be discouraged from buying insurance to cover what Medicare does not cover already.

The Republicans evidently believe that MediGap coverage insulates patients from the cost of care; in essence, that our seniors are not paying enough for the care that they receive today.

We have had two Members this morning come up and talk about Medicare. They have failed to outline one specific change. They should be talking about MediScare, because they are scared to death to tell the American people how they are going to increase the cost of Medicare to every senior in this land.

DURBIN HARASS-THE-TOBACCO-FARMER AMENDMENT

(Mr. CHAMBLISS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose what I call the Durbin harass-the-tobacco-farmer amendment to the Agriculture appropriations bill. Having lived in Georgia's farm belt all my adult life, I understand farm programs. Representing the 10th largest tobacco producing district in the country, I understand the importance of the tobacco program to family farmers in my State and across this country.

Now there is a big difference between improving farm programs and harassing farm families. The Durbin amendment is clearly downright harassment of tobacco farm families.

It does not improve the program, it strangles the farmers who participate. For example, if the Durbin amendment passes, the farmer would not have in-

formation on the safest use of chemicals and he would not benefit from his required participation in the crop insurance program.

But the Durbin amendment goes farther. In fact, it would not just affect the farmer, it would affect us all. This provision has the potential to prevent a buy-out of the program which could cost the taxpayers of this country an unbelievable \$1 billion.

If you do not want to throw a blindsided knockout punch to family farmers and to rural districts of America then I urge you to vote "no" on the Durbin amendment.

MEDICARE CUTS TO FUND TAX BREAKS

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, indeed there is a MediScare, and there is a MediScare because the seniors know the truth about what is happening. They know that the new Republican majority has found this little piggy bank, this little piggy bank that had "Medicare Trust Fund" written on it, and they have crossed out "Trust Fund" and they are not using the Medicare piggy bank to pay for the crown jewel of their contract.

What is the crown jewel of their contract? Tax breaks for people who make over \$350,000 a year. Seniors think that is unfair, when they also hear that Medicare is going broke. Let me tell you how much faster it is going to go broke if you keep using it as a piggy bank to pay for tax cuts.

When you look at the Medicare tax cut and you look at what it is going to cost to give everybody who makes more than \$350,000 a year a \$20,000 a year per person tax cut, it almost looks identical.

That is why there is MediScare, and they ought to absolutely be believing there is a MediScare. We ought to stop it.

TAX CUTS AND TAX INCREASES HAVE NO IMPACT ON MEDICARE TRUST FUND

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Members on the other side of the aisle do not understand how Medicare is funded. It is funded by a 1.45-percent payroll tax that is levied on employees and matched by employers, and if that tax is not paid, it will not be funded at all. It does not come from the general revenues of the Federal Government, it comes from a trust fund.

It does not matter if we raise one penny of taxes other than the 1.45 percent. It does not matter if we raise those or if we cut them. It has no impact whatsoever. The trust fund will go bankrupt completely in 7 years, regardless of what we do with those taxes. So

tax cuts and tax increases in the general revenue have absolutely no impact on the Medicare trust fund.

TAX BREAK DETRIMENTAL TO NATION

(Mr. HILLIARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow the extreme right wing agenda of the Republican party to ruin this Nation in order to give a shameless tax break to their wealthy supporters. How can the Republicans cut programs like Medicare and Medicaid for seniors, and health programs for mothers and infants, and, yes, still propose this obscene tax break for the rich?

Mr. Speaker, this shameless tax break is bad for the working men and women of America, and, if it is bad for them, it is bad for Americans. And, yes, Republican are bad for America.

REPUBLICANS HAVE HEHEDED WARNINGS ON MEDICARE CAPS

(Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I do not know what we are talking about here when the other side is talking about cuts in Medicare. It seems to me that going from \$4,800 per recipient per year to \$6,700 is an increase.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the liberals on the other side of the aisle, Republicans have heeded the warnings of the Medicare Trustees Report. That report concluded that immediate action is needed to save Medicare for future generations.

Republicans are fully aware that millions of Americans rely on Medicare to help meet their health care needs. That is why it is called Medi-Care, because it provides care for our parents and grandparents.

On the other hand, liberal Democrats want to exploit this issue. To them this is MediScare. They want to scare people into believing something that is not true. Their tactics are fear, and their goal is to divide the American people.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare is too important a program to be allowed to go bankrupt. The American people must know that Republicans intend to protect and preserve Medicare. We will protect it for current and future beneficiaries, and we will not allow Medicare to become MediScare.

TAXES, TAXES, TAXES

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, retirement tax, income tax, property tax,

excise tax, sales tax, beer tax, tobacco tax, cable tax, telephone tax, gasoline tax, hotel tax, surtaxes, taxes on taxes, and, don't forget when you die, inheritance tax. But also how about tolls, user fees, service charges, licenses, transfers. And some experts around the country are saying we don't need tax reform.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. Maybe, just maybe, these so-called experts are so dumb, we could throw them at the ground and they would probably miss.

REAL CUTS BEING MADE IN FEDERAL EXPENDITURES

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed once again this morning to hear the other side of the aisle talking about imaginary cuts to Medicare, cuts which have never been proposed by the Republicans and which we never plan to implement. I want to show you the cuts that the Republicans are implementing, and this chart shows the beginning of that effort.

We might call it a Sav-O-Meter. The legislative branch we have cut by \$150 million; foreign aid by \$1.5 billion; the energy and water budget by \$1.6 billion; the Interior budget by \$1.6 billion.

We are just starting. We are only partway through the appropriations process, and we have already cut \$5 billion out of the Federal budget compared to last year. We expect to go up to about \$21 billion.

What does this mean to Mr. and Mrs. Taxpayer of America? Roughly at this point about \$50 per family in cuts already. We expect to get up in the neighborhood of \$210 to \$250 in cuts for the average American family. Those are real cuts. Those are cuts the people will notice. They are not the imaginary cuts the other side talks about.

PROGRAMS DESPERATELY NEEDED BY CHILDREN BEING CUT

(Mr. ROEMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, just this week Columbia University released a poll where they asked our Nation's children what is your biggest fear or concern in school today, in 1995?

Well, what would you guess they answered? Was it an equation in an algebra test? That would have been my biggest worry. No. Was it a biology test? No. Was it drugs in school? Yes.

By a 2-to-1 margin, our children are more worried about drugs in school than algebra, biology, or even guns in school. So what are we doing about that? What did the Republicans do with our Drug Free School Program, which has received bipartisan support through the years? They cut it by 60 percent; 23 million children are going

to be cut off Drug Free School Programs.

Now, unless you have got a lobbyist around here, sometimes it means that you do not fair very well. Let's cut the space station. Let's cut B-2 bombers. Let's not cut something our children desperately need.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

(Mr. MARTINI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over the Supreme Court's recent decision in Hubbard versus United States. In that decision the high court overturned a Federal statute that has been used to prosecute Members of Congress and others who intentionally and knowingly release false or deceptive information to Congress. The current law no longer is applicable to such situations.

As a former Federal prosecutor, I know that section 1001 of 18 U.S. Code is a critical provision of law, which protects the Federal Government from potential waste, fraud, and abuse.

That's why in response to the Supreme Court's decision, I have introduced the Government Accountability Act (H.R. 1678) which will extend the false statement statute to all three branches of the Federal Government.

If Congress fails to act, unscrupulous public officials, contractors, and private citizens will be able to engage in acts of fraud and misconduct against the Federal Government without fear of punishment.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to serve the American people not ourselves.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 1678 which brings accountability back to the Federal Government.

□ 1020

TAX BREAKS FOR THE WEALTHY

(Mr. BROWN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a modern day Robin Hood story to tell. Except this one, unlike the original story, does not have a noble ending. You see, the Robin Hood of Capitol Hill has it backward: He is stealing from the poor to give to the rich.

Of course, Republicans do not want to admit this. But how else can we describe the Republican plan to cut Medicare to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy?

Consider this: The median income of senior citizens in 1993 was about \$15,000 for males and \$8,500 for females. About 3.8 million seniors lived below the poverty level in that year.

It is this group of citizens—27 million of them—that will have about \$1,060